Educator Compensation Reform Implementation Checklist

This checklist identifies the major components of an alternative educator compensation plan and the planning, design, and implementation steps that should be followed. Before launching a new compensation plan at the school or district level, we recommend that districts and states use this checklist to discuss and decide the following:

- Who should be involved
- How decisions will be made
- Where necessary resources will be obtained
- When major project milestones will be completed

A. Overall Plan Components	Yes	No	NA
1. Have you identified a project director?	❏	❏	❏
2. If you have identified a project director, does he or she have sufficient authority to make decisions?	❏	❏	❏
3. Are individuals at the upper levels of district or institutional leadership informed, engaged, and committed?	❏	❏	❏
4. Have you created a representative compensation committee to ensure that you have necessary buy-in and support from stakeholders?	❏	❏	❏
5. Have you agreed upon the type and size of performance awards?	❏	❏	❏
6. Have you identified the measures you will use to assess group or individual performance?	❏	❏	❏
7. Have you determined how much the new compensation plan will cost, overall and per year?	❏	❏	❏
8. Have you identified sources of funding and secured the necessary commitments?	❏	❏	❏
9. Do you have a comprehensive public information and media communication plan in place?	❏	❏	❏
10. Do you have sufficient capacity in the areas of information technology, testing, and research to implement and evaluate a new compensation plan?	❏	❏	❏
11. Are other relevant organizational components aligned, such as Human Resources, Payroll, and Testing?	❏	❏	❏
12. Have you developed an appropriate and comprehensive evaluation design?	❏	❏	❏

A. Overall Plan Components (Continued)	Yes	No	NA
13. Have project staff and leadership agreed to incorporate feedback from the evaluation and undertake midcourse corrections?	❏	❏	❏
14. Have you established benchmarks to assess project progress?	❏	❏	❏

B. Stakeholder Approvals and Engagement	Yes	No	NA
1. Have you assembled a compensation committee that includes school district officials as well as the teachers and/or principals whose salaries will be affected by the new plan?	❏	❏	❏
2. Have you invited the following individuals and groups to serve on the committee so that they are active participants in discussions, planning, and decisions from the beginning?			
a. Superintendent	❏	❏	❏
b. Teachers union/association representatives	❏	❏	❏
c. Additional teachers	❏	❏	❏
d. Principal(s)	❏	❏	❏
e. Other central office personnel	❏	❏	❏
f. School board members	❏	❏	❏
g. Other community representatives	❏	❏	❏
h. State or municipal officials, if necessary	❏	❏	❏
i. Other:	❏	❏	❏

C. Communication Plan	Yes	No	NA
1. As part of your communication plan, have you developed informational materials that clearly explain to teachers and principals the criteria you are using to determine which educators are eligible for a performance award and what they must do to earn one?	❏	❏	❏
2. Have you developed informational materials that clearly explain the professional development opportunities you are providing to help teachers and principals improve their performance so that they can earn a performance award?	❏	❏	❏
3. As part of your communication plan, have you developed informational materials, specifically for parents, that explain how the new educator compensation plan works and why you are implementing it?	❏	❏	❏
4. Does your communication plan include multiple means of distributing information to educators and the public (e.g., brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, website)?	❏	❏	❏
5. At a minimum, does your communication plan include regular meetings with teachers and principals so that they can ask questions and raise concerns?	❏	❏	❏
C. Communication Plan (Continued)	Yes	No	NA

6. Does your communication plan also provide other ways for educators to gather information quickly and easily (e.g., confidential hotline, convenient afterschool drop-in sessions, trained individuals at each school site who can answer questions)?	❑	❑	❑
7. Have you developed a strategy to explain the new compensation plan to the media and how awards are determined?	❑	❑	❑
8. Does your communication plan include strategies to sustain the new compensation plan by building support for it among policymakers, the business community, foundations, the public, and other key stakeholders?	❑	❑	❑

D. Award Structure	Yes	No	NA
1. Have you decided which and how many educator positions will be included (e.g., all classroom teachers, only teachers of core academic subjects, paraprofessionals as well as teachers, assistant principals as well as principals)?	❑	❑	❑
2. Have you decided whether you will reward individuals, groups, or both?	❑	❑	❑
3. If you are planning to reward groups of teachers, have you decided which groups (e.g., all teachers in the school, all math teachers in the school, all 4th grade math teachers in the school)?	❑	❑	❑
4. If you intend to reward all teachers or groups of teachers, have you determined how you will evaluate the performance of those who teach nontested subjects and grades (e.g., preschool, art, music, physical education, 5th grade science)?	❑	❑	❑
5. If your compensation plan will exclude any individuals or groups, have you developed a clear justification that explains why?	❑	❑	❑
6. Have you agreed upon the size of the awards you will offer?	❑	❑	❑
7. Have you decided to offer any noncash awards (e.g., housing incentives, tuition assistance, tax incentives, additional credit toward retirement)?	❑	❑	❑
8. Have you decided whether the new compensation plan will be voluntary or mandatory?	❑	❑	❑
9. Have you decided to phase in the new compensation plan as new teachers are hired or switch all teachers to the new plan at the same time?	❑	❑	❑
10. Will current teachers be allowed to opt out if they want to remain under the present pay plan?	❑	❑	❑

E. **Financial Consequences**	Yes	No	NA
1. Have you identified the sources of funding that you will use to pay for the new compensation plan?	❏	❏	❏
2. Have you calculated the maximum cost of the new compensation plan year by year?	❏	❏	❏
3. Have you decided how the awards will be paid (e.g., one-time bonus; permanent increase to base salary; premium for teachers of hard-to-fill subjects in addition to their regular salary; in-kind payment made in the form of goods and services, rather than cash)?	❏	❏	❏
4. Have you decided whether awards will count toward individual pensions?	❏	❏	❏
5. Have you determined how close to the period of performance the awards will be paid?	❏	❏	❏
6. Have you decided how you will time the payouts, so that you allow enough time for the reasonable delivery of data as well as rigorous quality control checks?	❏	❏	❏
7. Have you identified the agency that will actually pay the awards (e.g., state education agency, school district, or community foundation)?	❏	❏	❏

F. **Performance Measures**	Yes	No	NA
1. Have you decided upon the method that you will use to measure student achievement (e.g., value-added, gain scores)?	❏	❏	❏
2. Have you identified the test(s) that you will use to measure student academic performance?	❏	❏	❏
3. If you are contracting out any of the data collection and analysis, does your timeline correspond with the contractor's timeline?	❏	❏	❏
4. Have you agreed upon the other sources of information that you will use to assess educator performance over time? Consider the following options: a. Supervisors' judgments (e.g., principals, mentor teachers) b. Peers' judgments c. Other:	❏ ❏ ❏	❏ ❏ ❏	❏ ❏ ❏
5. Have you identified the teacher or principal evaluation instrument(s) that will be used?	❏	❏	❏
6. Have you developed a plan for training the individuals who will be using these instruments to evaluate teacher and principal performance?	❏	❏	❏

F. Performance Measures (Continued)	Yes	No	NA
7. Have you determined whether other teacher and administrator actions will be rewarded? Consider the following actions:			
a. Completes specific professional development activities	❏	❏	❏
b. Assumes additional roles and responsibilities (e.g., master teacher, mentor teacher)	❏	❏	❏
c. Works in a hard-to-staff school	❏	❏	❏
d. Teaches hard-to-fill subject or specialization (e.g., math, science, special education, bilingual education)	❏	❏	❏
e. Other:	❏	❏	❏
8. If any of the additional actions above will be rewarded, have you decided how you will weight them?	❏	❏	❏

G. Information Technology Considerations	Yes	No	NA
G1. Decision Support Needs			
1. Does your accountability system provide timely data for effective data-based decision making? (For example, are diagnostic test results available in time and in the right subject areas to allow school staff to identify students who need additional support to pass high-stakes tests?)	❏	❏	❏
2. Are data available at the appropriate level of specificity? (For example, does your data system enable you to link students to teachers and subjects taught so that you can identify which teachers to reward when student performance improves? Can you do this at both the elementary and secondary levels?)	❏	❏	❏
3. Are multiple forms of evidence or data included in any evaluation of performance? Consider the following:			
a. Value-added measures	❏	❏	❏
b. Observational/evaluative ratings of teachers and school leaders	❏	❏	❏
c. Adequacy of classroom resources	❏	❏	❏
d. Portfolios or other examples of student work	❏	❏	❏
e. Schools and classroom climate	❏	❏	❏
G2. Reporting Applications			
1. Does your information technology system allow you to go beyond basic compliance reporting and evaluate curriculum effectiveness, success of teacher induction practices, and other variables?	❏	❏	❏
2. Are formal or informal processes in place to identify the data and reporting needs of individuals at varying levels of the organization (e.g., district administrators, school principals, classroom teachers)?	❏	❏	❏
3. Does the data collection design process include capacity for future growth?	❏	❏	❏
4. Does your school or district have the ability to collect additional data?	❏	❏	❏

G. Information Technology Considerations (Continued)	Yes	No	NA
5. Does your school or district have the ability to collect existing data more frequently?	❑	❑	❑
6. Does the information technology system development process allow users to define new information needs?	❑	❑	❑
G3. Technical Considerations			
1. Have you determined who needs information or data access and from where?	❑	❑	❑
2. Do you have a governance system in place to respond to changing needs?	❑	❑	❑
3. Does your vendor have the capacity to be flexible if system modifications are needed?	❑	❑	❑
4. Are the information technology systems used for creating and viewing reports available at the school and classroom levels?	❑	❑	❑
G4. Organizational Considerations			
1. Are information technology system users an integral part of the design process?	❑	❑	❑
2. Have you decided whether you will use school, grade, or classroom value-added information?	❑	❑	❑
3. Do information technology system managers have performance and use targets that will inform them of the effectiveness of the system?	❑	❑	❑
4. Do you have a data dictionary system in place that contains information about the stored data, including details of its meaning; its relationship to other data; and its origin, usage, and format?	❑	❑	❑
5. Is a process in place to capture and incorporate changes to the data dictionary system?	❑	❑	❑
6. Does the group charged with developing and deploying decision support resources have access to senior decision makers in the district?	❑	❑	❑
7. Do senior district leaders support the creation of cross-functional teams (e.g., groups that include curricular specialists with information technology and accountability staff)?	❑	❑	❑

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) was awarded to Westat—in partnership with Learning Point Associates, Synergy Enterprises Inc., Vanderbilt University, and the University of Wisconsin—by the U.S. Department of Education in October 2006.

The primary purpose of CECR is to support the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees with their implementation efforts through the provision of ongoing technical assistance and the development and dissemination of timely resources. CECR also is charged with raising national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation through a newsletter, a Web-based clearinghouse, and other outreach activities. We look forward to an exciting partnership with the TIF grantees as we embark together on blazing a new path for education reform.